

GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT CAPTURES, RELOCATIONS AND REMOVALS IN NORTHWEST WYOMING

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



Submitted to the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee. This report is available to the public at each Wyoming Game and Fish Department Regional Office and on the Department's website at <http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/grizzlymanagement/index.asp>. This report is in fulfillment of the requirements in Wyoming Statute 23-1-1001(c). Questions about this report or its content can be directed to Mark Bruscino, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 2820 State Highway 120, Cody, WY 82414, (307) 527-7125, Mark.Bruscino@wgf.state.wy.us

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Introduction

Human-bear interactions and conflicts in Wyoming are typically a result of bears seeking unnatural foods in association with people, property, or when they kill livestock. The number and location of human-bear conflicts is influenced by unsecured unnatural attractants (e.g. human foods and garbage), natural food distribution and abundance, bear numbers and distribution, and human and livestock use patterns on the landscape.

Capturing bears in areas where they may come into conflict with people and relocating them to remote wildland settings is a common practice throughout the world where humans and bears share the land. Relocating bears achieves several social and conservation functions: 1.) It reduces the chance of property damage, livestock damage, or human interactions in areas where the potential for conflict is high; 2.) It reduces the potential for bears to become food conditioned and/or human habituated which often times results in destructive and/or dangerous behaviors; 3.) It allows bears the opportunity to forage on natural foods and remain wary of people; 4.) Relocation can prevent removing bears from the population and may be beneficial in meeting population management objectives.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department relocates and removes black and grizzly bears as part of routine management operations. The decision to relocate or remove a bear is made after considering a number of variables including age and sex of the animal, behavioral traits, health status, physical injuries or abnormalities, type of conflict, severity of conflict, known history of the animal, human safety concerns, and population management objectives. Grizzly bears are relocated in accordance with state and federal law, regulation, and policy.

In 2005 the Wyoming Legislature enacted House Bill 203, which created Wyoming Statute 23-1-1001 (Appendix I). This statute requires the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to:

- (a) Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the department shall provide notification to the county sheriff of the county to which the bear is relocated within five (5) days of each grizzly bear relocation and shall issue a press release to the media and sheriff in the county where each grizzly bear is relocated;
- (b) The notice and press release shall provide the following information:
 - (i) The date of the grizzly bear relocation;
 - (ii) The number of grizzly bears relocated; and
 - (iii) The location of the grizzly bear relocation, as provided by commission rule and regulation;
- (c) No later than January 15 of each year the department shall submit an annual report to the joint travel, recreation, wildlife and cultural resources interim committee. The annual report shall include the total number and relocation area of each grizzly bear relocated during the previous calendar year. The department shall also make available the annual report to the public.

Subsequently, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission promulgated regulations in Chapter 58 (Appendix II) of the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulations to further direct the implementation of Wyoming Statute 23-1-1001.

This report satisfies the requirements set forth in section (c) of the statute and provides additional information on grizzly bear captures, relocations and removals in Wyoming during 2010.

Grizzly Bear Management Captures, Relocations, and Removals

During 2010, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department captured 60 grizzly bears on 65 occasions (55 animals were captured once, and 5 animals were captured twice) in an attempt to prevent or resolve conflicts (Fig. 1). Forty-seven individuals were lone bears, 2 were adult females with 2 yearlings, 1 was an adult female with 3 yearlings, and 1 was an adult female with 2 cubs of the year. Of the 65 bear capture events, 49 (75%) involved bears that were relocated from areas where they were causing conflicts with livestock or property, or moved preemptively to avoid conflicts. Thirteen capture events (20%) involved bears that were removed from the population by agency personnel. These bears were removed after capture due to a history of previous conflicts, a known history of close association with humans, or they were deemed unsuitable for release into the wild (e.g. orphaned cubs, poor physical condition, human safety threat). There were 3 (5%) non-target bears captured during 2010 that were released on site.

Thirty-three (51%) of the 65 capture events occurred in Park County, 12 (18%) in Teton County, 11 (17%) in Sublette County, and 9 (14%) captures occurred in Fremont County (Table 1). Of the 49 relocation events, 24 (49%) were released in Teton County, 21 (43%) bears were released in Park County, and 4 (8%) was released in Fremont County (Table 1). All relocated bears were released on U.S. Forest Service (n=46), Grand Teton National Park (n=1) or Wyoming Game and Fish Department (n=2) lands in or adjacent to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone (RZ) (Fig. 2). Three non-target captured bears were not moved and were released at their capture site (G158 and 2 non-marked (NM) bears).

All independent bears greater than 2 years old, with the exception of one small 3-year old, (n=31) that were relocated were fitted with a VHF radio-tracking collar to allow their movements to be documented after release. Aerial attempts to obtain movement and location data were made approximately every 10-14 days. Relocated bears wearing radio collars moved a mean straight-line distance of 43.3 miles (range=0.4-96.3 miles) from the release site to their last known location in 2010. Of the 28 bears for which good movement data exists, 5 bears moved back to within 10 miles of their original capture site but were not known to cause additional conflicts. Eighteen of the 28 bears remained within the RZ as of their last known location and all were on National Forest or Park Service lands.

Notification to the County Sheriff and the Media

Within 5-days of releasing a grizzly bear, the county Sheriff was notified by e-mail and a press release was distributed to all local media contacts in the county where the bear was released. The media release contained information on the location of the grizzly bear release, the number of grizzly bears relocated, the date of the relocation and the reason the grizzly bear was relocated (Table 1).



Figure 1. Capture locations (n=65) for grizzly bears captured, relocated, released, or removed in 2010. Bears with "G" in front of their number were marked but not wearing radio collars upon release typically because they were too young to be collared. Bears identified with "NM" were non-target bears released without handling and "CUB" designates an unmarked dependant offspring of a captured adult female.



Figure 2. Release locations (n=52) for grizzly bears captured, relocated, or released on site in 2010. Bears with "G" in front of their number were marked but not wearing radio collars upon release typically because they were too young to be collared. Bears identified with "NM" were non-target bears released without handling and "CUB" designates an unmarked dependant offspring of a captured adult female.

65

13 preemptive

Table 1. Date, bear ID number, capture location, release site, and reasons for capturing, relocating or removing the grizzly bear(s).

Date	Bear No.	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason	Comments
4/24/2010	634	Park	Wiggins Fork	Fremont	Livestock damage	Cattle damage, frequenting developed areas
4/24/2010	635	Park	Wiggins Fork	Fremont	Preemptive	Frequenting calving pastures
4/25/2010	637	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Preemptive	Frequenting calving pastures
4/25/2010	636	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Preemptive	Frequenting calving pastures
5/3/2010	G139	Teton	Wiggins Fork	Fremont	Preemptive	Frequenting subdivision
5/8/2010	638	Fremont	Sunlight Creek	Park	Livestock damage	Horse depredation
5/18/2010	642	Park	Sheffield Creek	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
5/19/2010	G152	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Preemptive	In landfill
5/23/2010	632	Park	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Repeatedly damaging coops/killing chickens
6/12/2010	636	Park	Fox Creek	Park	Food reward	Garbage
6/19/2010	646	Park	Removed	NA	Human fatality	Human fatality
6/26/2010	337	Park	Squirrel Creek	Teton	Preemptive	In landfill
7/3/2010	587	Sublette	Pilgrim Creek	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
7/6/2010	G154	Sublette	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Food reward	Obtained pet food, property damage
7/10/2010	Not Marked	Park	Removed to zoo	NA	Orphaned cub	Orphaned cub
7/13/2010	G139	Fremont	Removed	NA	Food reward	Aggression towards humans
7/16/2010	647	Sublette	Fox Creek	Park	Livestock damage	Sheep damage
7/19/2010	648	Sublette	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
7/24/2010	649	Park	Lost Lake	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
7/27/2010	Not Marked	Sublette	Released on site	Sublette	Non-target capture	Non-target capture
7/30/2010	G155	Sublette	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
7/31/2010	Not marked	Park	Released on site	Park	Non-target capture	Non-target capture
8/3/2010	G156	Fremont	Cascade Creek	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
8/3/2010	279	Fremont	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
8/3/2010	G157	Fremont	Cascade Creek	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
8/5/2010	498	Fremont	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Chronic depredations, teeth worn and broken
8/8/2010	G158	Sublette	Released on site	Sublette	Non-target capture	Non-target capture
8/9/2010	650	Sublette	Sunlight Creek	Park	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
8/15/2010	603	Fremont	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Sheep damage, property damage
8/15/2010	651	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Preemptive	Frequenting developed area
8/16/2010	G157	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Food reward	Obtained poultry feed
8/17/2010	652	Sublette	Lost Lake	Fremont	Preemptive	Frequenting developed area
8/18/2010	G156	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Preemptive	Frequenting developed area
8/19/2010	G154	Fremont	Removed to zoo	NA	Food reward	Aggression towards humans, poor body condition
8/23/2010	654	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Preemptive	Frequenting developed areas and campgrounds
8/27/2010	656	Park	Bailey Creek	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
8/29/2010	283	Sublette	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Chronic depredations
9/5/2010	400	Sublette	Clarks Fork River	Park	Livestock damage	Sheep damage
9/5/2010	506	Teton	Clarks Fork River	Park	Food reward	Obtained livestock feed, property damage

Table 1. (continued)

Date	Bear No.	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason	Comments
9/7/2010	437	Teton	Removed	NA	Livestock damage	Chronic cattle damage
9/7/2010	550	Park	Bailey Creek	Teton	Preemptive	Frequenting developed areas and campgrounds
9/9/2010	G161	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Property damage	Damage to tents, obtained livestock feed
9/9/2010	315	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Property damage	Damage to tents, obtained livestock feed
9/9/2010	G159	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Property damage	Damage to tents, obtained livestock feed
9/9/2010	G160	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone River	Park	Property damage	Damage to tents, obtained livestock feed
9/10/2010	657	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Food reward	Obtained dog food and corn
9/11/2010	658	Park	Lost Lake	Teton	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
9/13/2010	659	Teton	North Fork of Shoshone	Park	Food reward	Frequenting outfitter camp
9/15/2010	558	Fremont	Reef Creek	Park	Livestock damage	Cattle damage
9/17/2010	G162	Park	Cascade Creek	Teton	Property damage	Apple trees
9/17/2010	660	Park	Cascade Creek	Teton	Property damage	Apple trees
9/17/2010	G163	Park	Cascade Creek	Teton	Property damage	Apple trees
9/23/2010	332	Park	Lost Lake	Teton	Property damage	Apple trees, frequenting residential areas
9/24/2010	478	Park	Removed	NA	Food reward	Frequenting residential area, property damage, poor body condition
9/25/2010	G164	Park	Fox Creek	Park	Food reward	Frequenting residential area, property damage
9/28/2010	517	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Property damage	Damaged oat hay, frequenting private ranch buildings
9/28/2010	CUB OF 517	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Property damage	Damaged oat hay, frequenting private ranch buildings
9/28/2010	CUB OF 517	Park	Boone Creek	Teton	Property damage	Damaged oat hay, frequenting private ranch buildings
9/29/2010	513	Park	Removed	NA	Property damage	Entered occupied building, damage to chicken coop
10/2/2010	628	Park	Falls River	Teton	Food reward	Obtained garbage, damage apple trees
10/3/2010	664	Park	Cascade Creek	Teton	Food reward	Obtained livestock feed, property damage
10/16/2010	666	Park	Blackrock Creek	Teton	Property damage	Apple trees, frequenting residential areas
10/17/2010	569	Park	Removed	NA	Food reward	Obtained garbage, damage apple trees
10/23/2010	667	Park	Cascade Creek	Teton	Preemptive	In landfill
11/4/2010	G167	Park	Fox Creek	Park	Preemptive	Frequenting developed area and cattle pasture

Appendix I. State of Wyoming's Grizzly Bear Relocation Statute

**ARTICLE 10
GRIZZLY BEAR RELOCATION**

23-1-1001. Grizzly bear relocation.

(a) Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the department shall provide notification to the county sheriff of the county to which the bear is relocated within five (5) days of each grizzly bear relocation and shall issue a press release to the media and sheriff in the county where each grizzly bear is relocated.

(b) The notice and press release shall provide the following information:

(i) The date of the grizzly bear relocation;

(ii) The number of grizzly bears relocated; and

(iii) The location of the grizzly bear relocation, as provided by commission rule and regulation.

(c) No later than January 15 of each year the department shall submit an annual report to the joint travel, recreation, wildlife and cultural resources interim committee. The annual report shall include the total number and relocation area of each grizzly bear relocated during the previous calendar year. The department shall also make available the annual report to the public.

Appendix II. Wyoming Game and Fish Commission's Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation

WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

CHAPTER 58

NOTIFICATION OF GRIZZLY BEAR RELOCATION REGULATION

Section 1. Authority. This regulation is promulgated by authority of W.S. §23-1-1001.

Section 2. Regulation. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission hereby adopts the following regulation governing notification to the County Sheriff and the media of grizzly bear relocations in the State of Wyoming. This regulation shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded by the Commission.

Section 3. Definitions. For the purpose of this regulation, definitions shall be as set forth in Title 23, Wyoming Statutes and the Commission also adopts the following definitions:

- (a) "County Sheriff" means the County Sheriff's Office in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated.
- (b) "Location of the grizzly bear relocation" means the proper name of the drainage in which a grizzly bear is relocated and the estimated number of miles from the relocation site to the nearest municipality, topographical feature or geographic location.
- (c) "Provide a press release" means the department shall provide to the County Sheriff and the media in the county in which a grizzly bear is relocated, a press release including the location of the grizzly bear relocation, number of grizzly bears relocated, date of the relocation and the reason the grizzly bear was relocated.

Section 4. Notification of relocation.

(a) Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the department shall notify the County Sheriff of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation via direct telephone conversation, written or electronic correspondence, or personal contact within five (5) days of the date of the relocation. The department shall provide a press release to the County Sheriff and the media in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation within five (5) days of the date of relocation of any grizzly bear.

Section 5. Savings Clause. If any provision of this regulation is held to be illegal or unconstitutional, such a ruling shall not affect other provisions of this regulation which can be given effect without the illegal or unconstitutional provision; and, to this end the provisions of this regulation are severable.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

By: Linda Fleming, President

Dated: July 12, 2005